/172 cont./

I brought out my magnetic bars and angled with them, as well as with my pocketknife magnetized on them, for needles scattered on the table, to the great delight of those present, which was made known with an abundance of extraordinary interjections, in which these primitive peoples /173/ are able to accomplish a great deal. The fact that they could not do the same thing with their own knives, made of soft iron, no matter how much I touched them with my amazing bars, seemed particularly miraculous to them. Czekanowsky decided that if he ever traveled through these regions again he would provide himself with various magnetic playthings for barter.

The compass caused almost even greater astonishment when they discovered that with this instrument one could find one's way in the tundra even during a snow storm. Their knowledge of astronomy does not seem to be very great; as far as was to be understood through the interpreter, the elder knew only the Great Bear, about which he maintained that "it moves its tail," but, with clear skies, experienced tundra guides are said to be able to orient themselves by the stars.

The statements of the elder completely confirmed all the praise that Chitrow bestowed on the inhabitants of these regions. Their love of their fellow men is positively unheard of and reminds one of patriarchal times and conditions. Not only do the rich never abandon their poorer fellow tribesmen in case of need, they feed and clothe them, and if, as often happens, the reindeer fall prey to wolves, they replace the loss for the ones robbed -- Chitrow says that a Tungus of his acquaintance was supported in this way for three successive years and that such support may amount to 30 reindeer, a sizable fortune here -- there even prevails a custom whereby the hunting booty, especially slain reindeer, is shared among all the companions or family members; the pelt is given to each member in turn -- with the exception of the fortunate hunter, who fears losing his talent for hunting if he violates this custom held sacred by the fathers. The two /174/ Tungus accompanying us made peculiar faces at

/185 cont./

233 that had brought us here were led a few versts farther to the right
[182] shore of the Olenëk, where there was more food for them. Lack of fodder for the reindeer is the principal reason why the inhabitants here do not keep them as draft animals, but instead use dogs, which, because of the great quantity of fish food that they need, are very troublesome, particularly in years when fish are not abundant. Our host here has a /186/ splendid herd of reindeer, which, however, he keeps with friends in the forest region; aside from the lack of food, the wolves, for which we too had to keep a nightly watch during the trip on the tundra, and in the winter the violent snowstorms, are a danger to the reindeer.

123 During our stay we received many presents of fish and arctic fox skins -- probably not the best, inasmuch as it was seen that we were not experts -- indeed, even garments that were no longer new, which, however, we refused. The people were generously compensated for this with tobacco, tea, sugar, ammunition, axes, and similar articles, in spite of their protests that they did not
431 expect anything at all in return. The custom of giving and re-
● 571 ceiving presents during visits is widespread everywhere here, and while it is possible that those in higher positions, especially the local administrative officials, do not count on any return gifts, those of the same standing not only desire, but demand them, and it even happens, as Chitrow tells, that such mutual assurances of esteem end in lawsuits because one party is dissatisfied.

122 On the morning of October 23 our narten stood before the door ready for travel -- nothing held us in the north any longer; we left the village at a rapid trot, accompanied for a stretch by the population running alongside. We were going south, following the birds of passage that had hastened on ahead of us long ago -- they had reached their goal long since, but we were still far away, frightfully far! Our stations were the same as before up to the Pur; we traveled as quickly as possible, since nothing held
[137] us any longer. Czekanowsky only took along a couple of trunks from stunted larches, which were growing in the middle of the tundra in the protection of river valleys; the largest was as thick as an arm and barely ten feet tall, but of a considerable age.

53: Tokarev and Gurvich E-4 (no date) 1964
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number of (ecclesiastical) books were published in Yakut. After the 1905 revolution, artistic and journalistic literature in Yakut began to appear.

Nevertheless, education remained on a low level among the broad Yakut masses. There were no Yakut national schools. Russian church and state schools began to appear in Yakutiya in the 18th century, but there were very few of them. Even in the early 1900's, there were only 11 rural primary schools in all of Yakutiya, and 57 parish and literacy schools. The masses had little access to these schools, and still less to the secondary schools; there were only 5 of these, and they were located only in cities. Of the Yakuts, it was mainly the children of toyons who could get into them.

Nevertheless, even at the end of the 19th century, a small Yakut intelligentsia began to appear—teachers, officials, lawyers and doctors, who had chiefly received education at Tomsk University. From among this intelligentsia there emerged individual amateurs of local history and folklore—the first Yakut ethnographers and collectors. But by their class affiliation and ideology, these first Yakut intellectuals were inclined to the toyon camp, and were infected with nationalism. Alongside this bourgeois-toyon intelligentsia, there appeared in the last years preceding the October Revolution, under the influence of Social-Democratic and Bolshevist propaganda by political exiles (particularly in the circle led by Yemelyan Yaroslavskiy), a small nucleus of progressive Russian cultural workers.

Socialist Reconstruction

Formation of Yakut ASSR

In Yakutiya, just as throughout the country, the establishment of the Soviet regime involved a fierce struggle against internal and external enemies. In the autumn of 1918 power was seized in Yakutsk by the followers of Kolchak with the help of the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries.[6] Hardly had the Yakutsk workers had time to overthrow the counterrevolutionary regime of Kolchak (December 15, 1919) when there flared up, particularly in the autumn of 1921, the kulak and White Guard revolts, led by tsarist officers and Yakut toyons who had been hiding in the remoter areas.

On February 16, 1922, the Presidium of the VTsIK (All-Union Central Executive Committee) adopted a resolution on the formation of the Yakut ASSR. On April 27, 1922, the Presidium, with M. I. Kalinin in the chair, reviewed this question again and decreed as follows: "To form a Yakut Autonomous Soviet Republic as a federal part of the RSFSR with its administrative center in Yakutsk."

In the autumn of 1922 the young Yakut Republic was faced with a serious threat: the American and Japanese imperialists had moved up General Pepelyayev's troops into Yakutya from Manchuria. The General received half a million rubles in gold from the American firm of Olaf Svenson and the British Hudson's Bay Company. The Americans and Japanese equipped Pepelyayev with weapons, ammunition and equipment. Food supplies and weapons were the responsibility of the Japanese

[6] The Mensheviks were a dissident wing of the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party (RSDRP), which was also the parent organization of the Communist Party. The Social Revolutionaries (SR's) were moderate agrarian socialists; they participated in the government during the first months after the October Revolution.—Ed.